

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

CASE NO.:

NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO,

Plaintiff,

v.

LEEANN’S LOCKER, LLC, and
EPPI INC d/b/a PALMETTO BAY
CHEVRON,

Defendants.

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO, individually and on behalf of all other similarly situated mobility-impaired individuals (hereinafter “Plaintiff”), sues LEEANN’S LOCKER, LLC and EPPI INC d/b/a PALMETTO BAY CHEVRON (hereinafter “Defendants”), and as grounds alleges:

JURISDICTION, PARTIES, AND VENUE

1. This is an action for injunctive relief, attorneys' fees, litigation expenses, and costs pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12181, et seq., (the “Americans with Disabilities Act” or “ADA”) and 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202.

2. The Court has original jurisdiction over Plaintiff’s claims arising under 42 U.S.C. § 12181, et seq. pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1343 and 42 U.S.C. § 12117(a).

3. Plaintiff, NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO, is an individual over eighteen years of age, with a residence in Miami-Dade County, Florida, and is otherwise *sui juris*.

4. At all times material, Defendant, LEEANN’S LOCKER, LLC, owned and operated

a commercial gas station at 16767 Old Cutler Rd. Palmetto Bay, Florida 33157 (hereinafter the “commercial property”) and conducted a substantial amount of business in that place of public accommodation in Palmetto Bay, Florida.

5. At all times material, Defendant, LEEANN’S LOCKER, LLC, was and is a Florida Limited Liability Company which is registered to conduct business in the State of Florida and has the principal place of business listed in this complaint in Palmetto Bay, Florida.

6. At all times material, Defendant, EPPI INC d/b/a PALMETTO BAY CHEVRON, was and is a Florida Limited Liability Company which is registered to conduct business in the State of Florida and has the principal place of business listed in this Complaint in Palmetto Bay, Florida.

7. At all times material, Defendant, EPPI INC d/b/a PALMETTO BAY CHEVRON, owned and operated a commercial gas station at 16767 Old Cutler Rd. Palmetto Bay, Florida 33157 (hereinafter the “Commercial property”) and conducted a substantial amount of business in that place of public accommodation in Palmetto Bay, Florida.

8. Venue is properly located in the Southern District of Florida because Defendants’ commercial property, gas station and mini-mart, and businesses are located in Miami-Dade County, Florida; Defendants regularly conduct business within Miami-Dade County, Florida; and because a substantial part(s) of the events or omissions giving rise to these claims occurred in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

9. Although well over thirty (30) years have passed since the effective date of Title III of the ADA, Defendants has yet to make its/their facilities accessible to individuals with disabilities.

10. Congress provided commercial businesses one and a half years to implement the

Act. The effective date was January 26, 1992. In spite of this abundant lead-time and the extensive publicity the ADA has received since 1990, Defendants have continued to discriminate against people who are disabled in ways that block them from access and use of Defendants' property and the businesses therein.

11. The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in 28 CFR 36.201 and requires landlords and tenants to be liable for compliance.

12. Plaintiff, NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO, is an individual with disabilities as defined by and pursuant to the ADA. NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO uses a wheelchair to ambulate. NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO has very limited use of his hands and cannot operate any mechanisms which require tight grasping or twisting of the wrist. He has lower paraplegia, which inhibits him from walking or otherwise ambulating without the use of a wheelchair. He is limited in his major life activities by such, including but not limited to walking, standing, grabbing, grasping and/or pinching.

13. Both Defendants, LEEANN'S LOCKER, LLC and EPPI INC d/b/a PALMETTO BAY CHEVRON, own, operate and/or oversee the Commercial Property; to include its general parking lot and parking spots specific to the tenant business therein and all other common areas open to the public located within the Commercial Property.

14. Defendant, EPPI INC d/b/a PALMETTO BAY CHEVRON, owns, operates and oversees the commercial gas station within its Co-Defendant's commercial property, to include the general parking lot and parking spots specific to its commercial gas station business therein and all other pathway and commercial goods areas, aisles and restroom areas, which are open to the public located within the commercial property.

15. The subject commercial property and gas station and mini-mart are open to the

public and are located in Palmetto Bay, Florida. The individual Plaintiff visits the commercial property, to include visits to the commercial property and business located within the commercial property on March 20, 2024, and encountered multiple violations of the ADA that directly affected his ability to use and enjoy the commercial property. He often visits the Commercial property and business located within the commercial property in order to avail himself of the goods and services offered there, and because it is approximately fourteen-sixteen (14-16) miles from his residence and is near other business and gas station and mini-mart he frequents as a patron. He plans to return to the commercial property within two (2) months from the date of the filing of this Complaint.

16. The Plaintiff, NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO, found the commercial property and commercial gas station business located within the commercial property to be rife with ADA violations. The Plaintiff encountered architectural barriers at the commercial property and Commercial gas station business located within the commercial property and wishes to continue his patronage and use of the premises.

17. The Plaintiff, NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO, has encountered architectural barriers that are in violation of the ADA at the subject commercial property. The barriers to access at Defendants' commercial property and commercial gas station business have each denied or diminished Plaintiff's ability to visit the commercial property and have endangered his safety in violation of the ADA. The barriers to access, which are set forth below, have likewise posed a risk of injury(ies), embarrassment, and discomfort to Plaintiff, NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO, and others similarly situated.

18. Defendant, LEEANN'S LOCKER, LLC, owns and operates a place of public accommodation as defined by the ADA and the regulations implementing the ADA, 28 CFR

36.201 (a) and 36.104. Defendant, LEEANN'S LOCKER, LLC, is responsible for complying with the obligations of the ADA. The place of public accommodation that Defendant, LEEANN'S LOCKER, LLC, owns and operates is the commercial property and/or businesses located at 16767 Old Cutler Rd. Palmetto Bay, Florida 33157.

19. Defendant, EPPI INC d/b/a PALMETTO BAY CHEVRON, owns and operates a place of public accommodation as defined by the ADA and the regulations implementing the ADA, 28 CFR 36.201 (a) and 36.104. Defendant, EPPI INC d/b/a PALMETTO BAY CHEVRON, is responsible for complying with the obligations of the ADA. The place of public accommodation that Defendant, EPPI INC d/b/a PALMETTO BAY CHEVRON, owns and operates is the commercial gas station and/or mini-mart business located at 16767 Old Cutler Rd. Palmetto Bay, Florida 33157.

20. Defendant, LEEANN'S LOCKER, LLC, as landlord and owner of the commercial property, is jointly and severally liable for all ADA violations listed in this Complaint with its commercial tenant and owner of a commercial gas station business, EPPI INC d/b/a PALMETTO BAY CHEVRON.

21. Plaintiff, NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO, has a realistic, credible, existing and continuing threat of discrimination from the Defendants' non-compliance with the ADA with respect to the described commercial property, including but not necessarily limited to the allegations of this Complaint. Plaintiff has reasonable grounds to believe that he will continue to be subjected to discrimination at the commercial property, in violation of the ADA. Plaintiff desires to visit the commercial property and gas station business located therein, not only to avail himself of the goods and services available at the commercial property, but to assure himself that the commercial property is in compliance with the ADA, so that he and others similarly situated

will have full and equal enjoyment of the commercial property without fear of discrimination.

22. Defendants have discriminated against the individual Plaintiff by denying him access to, and full and equal enjoyment of, the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations of the commercial property, as prohibited by 42 U.S.C. § 12182 et seq.

COUNT I - ADA VIOLATIONS

23. The Plaintiff adopts and re-alleges the allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 22 above as though fully set forth herein.

24. Defendants, LEEANN'S LOCKER, LLC and EPPI INC d/b/a PALMETTO BAY CHEVRON, have discriminated, and continue to discriminate, against Plaintiff in violation of the ADA by failing, inter alia, to have accessible facilities by January 26, 1992 (or January 26, 1993, if a Defendant has 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). A list of the violations that Plaintiff encountered during his visit to the commercial property, include but are not limited to, the following:

A. Parking Area

- i. The Plaintiff could not enter the store without assistance, as the required level landing is not provided. Violation: A level landing that is 60 inches minimum perpendicular to the doorway is not provided at accessible entrances violating Section 4.13.6 and Figure 25(a) of the ADAAG and Section 404.2.4 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- ii. The Plaintiff had difficulty traversing the path of travel due to abrupt changes in level. Violation: There are changes in levels of greater than ½ inch, violating Sections 4.3.8 and

4.5.2 of the ADAAG and Section 303 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

- iii. The Plaintiff had difficulty using some of the curb ramps, as the slopes are excessive.

Violation: There are curb ramps at the facility that contain excessive slopes, violating Section 4.7.2 of the ADAAG and Sections 405.2 and 406.1 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

- iv. The Plaintiff could not traverse through areas of the facility, as the required 36" path is not provided. Violation: A continuous path of travel connecting all essential elements of the facility is not provided, violating Sections 4.2.1, 4.3.2(2), & 4.3.3 of the ADAAG and Sections 206.2.2 & 403.5.1 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

- v. The Plaintiff had difficulty entering the restroom without assistance, as the door threshold is too high. Violation: There are threshold rises in excess of ½ inch at the restroom entrances, violating Section 4.13.8 of the ADAAG and Section 404.2.5 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

B. Access to Goods and Services

- i. There is seating provided at the facility that does not comply with the standards prescribed in Section 4.32 of the ADAAG and Sections 226 & 902 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

C. Public Restrooms

- i. There are permanently designated spaces without proper signage, violating Section 4.1.3(16) and 4.30 of the ADAAG and Sections 216.2 and 703 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

- ii. The Plaintiff had difficulty using the toilet without assistance, as it is not mounted at the required distance from the side wall. Violation: The water closet is mounted at a non-compliant distance from the side wall, violating Section 4.16.2 and Figure 28 of the ADAAG and Section 604.2 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- iii. The Plaintiff could not transfer to the toilet without assistance, as the rear grab bar is not mounted at the required length and the side grab bar is not mounted at the required location. Violation: The grab bars do not comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 4.16.4 & Figure 29 of the ADAAG and Section 604.5 & 609.4 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- iv. The Plaintiff could not transfer to the toilet without assistance, as a trashcan obstructs the clear floor space. Violation: The required clear floor space is not provided next to the toilet, violating Section 4.16.2 and Figure 28 of the ADAAG, 28 CFR 36.211, and Section 604.3 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- v. The Plaintiff could not transfer to the toilet without assistance, as objects are mounted less than 12” above a grab bar obstructing its use. Violation: The grab bars do not comply with the requirements prescribed in Sections 4.16.4 & 4.26 of the ADAAG and Section 609.3 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- vi. The Plaintiff was exposed to a cutting/burning hazard because the lavatory pipes are not wrapped. Violation: The lavatory pipes are not fully wrapped or maintained violating Section 4.19.4 of the ADAAG and Section 606.5 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- vii. The Plaintiff had difficulty using the locking mechanism on the restroom door without assistance, as it requires tight grasping. Violation: The restroom door has non-compliant hardware for disabled patrons, violating Sections 4.13.9 & 4.27.4 of the ADAAG and Sections 309.4 & 404.2.7 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable

RELIEF SOUGHT AND THE BASIS

25. The discriminatory violations described in this Complaint are not an exclusive list of the Defendants' ADA violations. Plaintiff requests an inspection of the Defendants' places of public accommodation in order to photograph and measure all of the discriminatory acts violating the ADA and barriers to access in conjunction with Rule 34 and timely notice. Plaintiff further requests to inspect any and all barriers to access that were concealed by virtue of the barriers' presence, which prevented Plaintiff, NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO, from further ingress, use, and equal enjoyment of the commercial plaza and gas station and mini-mart; Plaintiff requests to be physically present at such inspection in conjunction with Rule 34 and timely notice. A Plaintiff requests the inspection in order to participate in crafting a remediation plan to address Plaintiff's request for injunctive relief. The remediations for the ADA violations listed herein are readily achievable.

26. The Plaintiff, and all other individuals similarly situated, have been denied access to, and have been denied full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities privileges, benefits, programs and activities offered by Defendants' commercial property and commercial gas station business within the property; and has otherwise been discriminated against and damaged by the Defendants because of the Defendants' ADA violations as set forth above. The Plaintiff, and all others similarly situated, will continue to suffer such discrimination, injury and damage without the immediate relief provided by the ADA as requested herein. In order to remedy this discriminatory situation, the Plaintiff requires an inspection of the Defendants' place of public accommodation in order to determine all of the areas of non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Plaintiff further requests a remediation plan and the opportunity to participate in the crafting of the remediation plan in order to participate in crafting a remediation plan to address

Plaintiff's request for injunctive relief.

27. Defendants have discriminated against the Plaintiff by denying him access to full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations of their places of public accommodation or commercial facility, in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 12181 et seq. and 28 CFR 36.302 et seq. Defendants have also discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 12131 et seq. and 28 C.F.R. Part 35 et seq for excluding Plaintiff by reason of disability from participation in and denying him benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity. Furthermore, the Defendants continue to discriminate against Plaintiff, and all those similarly situated, by failing to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford all offered goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations to individuals with disabilities; and by failing to take such efforts that may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services.

28. Plaintiff is without adequate remedy at law, will suffer irreparable harm, and have a clear legal right to the relief sought. Further, injunctive relief will serve the public interest and all those similarly situated to Plaintiff. Plaintiff has retained the undersigned counsel and is entitled to recover attorneys' fees, costs and litigation expenses from Defendants pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12205 and 28 CFR 36.505.

29. Defendants are required to remove the existing architectural barriers to the physically disabled when such removal is readily achievable for their place of public similarly situated, will continue to suffer such discrimination, injury and damage without the immediate relief provided by the ADA as requested herein. In order to remedy this discriminatory situation,

the Plaintiff requires an inspection of the Defendants' places of public accommodation in order to determine all of the areas of non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

30. Notice to Defendants is not required as a result of the Defendants' failure to cure the violations by January 26, 1992 (or January 26, 1993, if a Defendant has 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). All other conditions precedent have been met by the Plaintiff or waived by the Defendant.

31. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12188, this Court is provided with authority to grant Plaintiff's Injunctive Relief, including an order to alter the property where Defendants operate its businesses, located within the commercial property and Commercial gas station located at 16767 Old Cutler Rd. Palmetto Bay, Florida 33157, the interiors, exterior areas, and the common exterior areas of the commercial property to make those facilities readily accessible and useable to the Plaintiff and all other mobility-impaired persons; or by closing the facility until such time as the Defendants cure its violations of the ADA.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff, NIGEL FRANK DE LA TORRE PARDO, respectfully requests that this Honorable Court issue (i) Injunctive relief against Defendants, including an order to make all readily achievable alterations to the facilities; or to make such facilities readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities to the extent required by the ADA; and to require Defendants to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford all offered goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations to individuals with disabilities; and by failing to take such steps that may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services; (ii) An award of attorneys' fees, costs and litigation expenses pursuant

to 42 U.S.C. § 12205 ; and (iii) such other relief as the Court deems just and proper, and/or is allowable under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Dated: June 12, 2024

ANTHONY J. PEREZ LAW GROUP, PLLC

Attorneys for Plaintiff

7950 w. Flagler Street, Suite 104

Miami, Florida 33144

Telephone: (786) 361-9909

Facsimile: (786) 687-0445

Primary E-Mail: ajp@ajperezlawgroup.com

Secondary E-Mails: jr@ajperezlawgroup.com

By: /s/ Anthony J. Perez
ANTHONY J. PEREZ
Florida Bar No.: 535451